SouthCambs Magazine

www.scambs.gov.uk

Winter 2025

Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation
Pages 8 and 9

New weekly food waste collections
Page 20

Support local events this winter
Page 44

South Cambridgeshire's

INDOOR CHRISTMAS MARKET

Sunday 7 December 2025

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11am to 3pm

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www.scambs.gov.uk/christmas-market

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Six months of comedy shows with Big Deal Comedy

Turn to page 46

News in brief | Sustainable homes and vibrant places | Being green to our core
Healthy and supported communities | Financially secure and fit for the future
Helping businesses to thrive in South Cambridgeshire | Competition

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Hello

Welcome to the winter edition of South Cambs Magazine

As we enter the final part of 2025, I encourage you to have your say during the latest consultation into our new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This is a hugely important planning document that will touch all our lives well into the future. It will look at where new homes and workplaces could be built over the next 20 years, along with essential community facilities and public services to support them. Learn more about this vital work that we are doing with Cambridge City Council on pages eight and nine.

Elsewhere this issue, there's a heads-up about changes to what you'll need to do with any food waste you have at home. Throughout next year, all households will be getting a new weekly food waste collection service as we work to increase recycling rates and cut down on landfill. Find out what this means for you on page 20.

The colder weather once again means we're all spending more on heating our homes. This winter do make sure that you are getting all the cost-of-living support you are entitled to. All too often, people can miss out. There are details of the support on offer this winter on page 32.

Finally, do visit our dedicated local hospitality and tourism website www.visitsouthcambs.co.uk to see details of the many exciting events and activities happening in South Cambridgeshire this festive period. There's fun for all the family – so flick to our preview page 44.

I wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year – and would love to see you at our indoor Christmas Market at Cambourne Village College on Sunday 7 December.

Cllr Bridget Smith
Leader
South Cambridgeshire District Council

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Spring 2026 issue

The next issue will be delivered between **Monday 23 February and Saturday 7 March 2026.**

Contact Smart Distribution for delivery enquiries.

scdc@smartdistribution.co.uk
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Contact us

It's easier to contact us online. You can do more online at a time to suit you.

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SAM can help you instantly, or signpost you to the relevant team that can support you further. Just click on the speech bubble icon on our website and ask SAM a question.
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@SouthCambs

If you phone us

Our phone line is available 8am to 5:30pm on weekdays - apart from Wednesdays when it stays open later until 6:30pm.

Our AI-powered telephone system makes it easier and faster for you to get the help you need.

When you phone, you'll be asked to briefly explain what your enquiry is about. The more specific you are, the better – our system uses your response to connect you directly with the right advisor, who's trained to deal with your particular issue. Prefer to speak to someone straight away? That's fine. You can still choose to speak to an advisor at any time!

This system is all about giving you a smoother and faster service. So next time you call, try to be as specific as possible.

If you visit us

Our office opening hours are 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. If you come to the office, we'll try our very best to resolve your query there and then. If we can't, our advisors will book you a follow-up appointment when you will be able to speak to someone. Alternatively, you can book your own appointment at www.scambs.gov.uk/book-an-appointment

Request a large print copy communications@scambs.gov.uk

Putting you first

If you phone us we will:

- resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible.
- provide voicemail if the person you need is unavailable.
- answer your phone message within three working days.

If you write to us we will:

- reply to your letter or email within 10 working days.

If we write to you we will:

- write in plain language.
- arrange for translation, large type, braille or audio tapes upon request.

If we visit you we will:

- carry identification that you can check with a phone call.
- arrive at the time we say we will, or give you as much notice as possible if we have to change the time.

If we get it wrong we will:

- apologise if we have made a mistake or failed to meet our standards.
- acknowledge your written complaint within three working days.
- reply in full to your complaint within 10 working days.

Assisted digital service support

We run an Assisted Digital Service Support to ensure nobody is excluded from completing an online application or e-form due to difficulty with digital skills or access to a computer. Eligible residents are offered telephone support or face to face help by one of our contact centre advisors. Your local library or Parish Council hub can also help.

To take advantage of this service, just call us on 01954 713 000.

News in brief

New rules to prevent anti-social driving at Milton Park and Ride

We've confirmed plans to tackle anti-social and dangerous driving at Milton Park and Ride.

Our Cabinet agreed to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Butt Lane. This introduces new rules which – if broken – could lead to fines.

Recent issues reported late at night and at weekends included cars and motorbikes speeding, revving engines, racing, stunts, loud music, and threatening or rude behaviour.

We consulted on plans for the PSPO – with 118 of 125 respondents in favour. One person said the site sounded like the starting grid at a racetrack.

Automatic number plate recognition systems and CCTV will now be used to enforce the new rules, allowing vehicles to be tracked and fines issued if the dangerous driving continues.

Remember to re-apply for your postal vote

Our Elections team have been in touch with over 15,000 South Cambridgeshire postal voters - by post and email - to let them know their postal votes will expire at the end of January.

If you have received a letter or email from us, and you wish to continue to vote by post, you must make a new application as soon as possible. Your postal vote will be removed if you don't make a new application.

Affected voters can apply online now at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote
If you have any questions or wish to cancel your postal vote, please email elections@scambs.gov.uk

Community forums 2026

Our Communities team invite you to join us at any one of the first round of community forums taking place in the new year. These events showcase developments at various sites across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, and offer an opportunity for residents to hear from and speak to developers, stakeholders and local councils. These vary in the format, from in-person events to online sessions via Microsoft Teams.

Upcoming forums

Northstowe: 4 February

Bourn Airfield and Cambourne: 11 February

North West and West Cambridge: 26 February

Cambridge East: 11 March

Waterbeach: 18 March

North East Cambridge: 25 March

For more information, visit www.scambs.gov.uk/community-forums

Community Chest Update

We get on average five applications a month for our Community Chest grants, reflecting interest from a wide range of not-for-profit organisations across South Cambridgeshire, including day centres, bowls clubs, and youth groups.

When your magazine went to print, we had just under £45,000 remaining in our Community Chest budget, alongside around £1,300 in the Biodiversity budget. These sums are available until the end of March 2026. Recent projects that we have funded include Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust in Milton, who purchased a nesting raft, and Lolworth Parish Meeting, who are replacing basketball facilities for residents.

If you are interested in applying but are unsure whether your organisation meets the criteria, please get in touch for guidance and support.

Visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/community-chest** or email **Community.Chest@scambs.gov.uk**

Stay active this winter

Our Active & Healthy 4 Life programme includes the exercise referral scheme available at all community sports centres, and cardiac rehabilitation classes at Sawston and Cambourne sports centres. These sessions provide support locally for a range of health conditions. This includes high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, asthma, or pre/post operative and mental health, and a specialist cardiac class for those having experienced a cardiac event. You are introduced to exercise to suit your health and current ability by qualified and experienced instructors.

Simply ask your health professional to complete a referral form, then contact your preferred sports centre to schedule an instructor appointment. Join for £20 per month for four months.

For Exercise Referral visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/active** and for cardiac rehab visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/cardiac** or email **AandH4L@scambs.gov.uk**

We're also pleased to report that **Melbourn Sports Centre has reopened, and is taking new exercise referral patients.**

Recycle your Christmas tree and support a great local cause

Arthur Rank Hospice charity has a team of volunteers who will collect your real Christmas tree in January, hassle-free. Trees are chipped and used for mulch or composted. Residents of postcode areas CB1, CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CB21, CB22, CB23, CB24, CB25, SG8 and SG19 3 can register for a collection at **www.arhc.org.uk/tree-recycling**

Collections will be carried out between 8 and 10 January 2026, and you can register up to 10am on 4 January. Last year the Hospice volunteers collected a record 4,065 trees and raised over £83,000 for the charity!

School holiday netball camps

Join our popular netball camp at Impington Sports Centre for children in school year three to nine. Suitable for children of all abilities and led by qualified coaches, the camps offer a fantastic opportunity for kids to learn new and develop existing netball skills within game-based activities within a safe, inclusive and enjoyable environment.

Dates for your diary 2026

- Easter – 30 & 31 March
- May half term – 27 May
- Summer – 20 & 21 July
- October half term – 28 October

Email **holiday.camps@scambs.gov.uk** if you wish to be on our mailing list.

For full details go to our website – **www.scambs.gov.uk/sportscamps**

South Cambs Magazine

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* source: Legal 500 UK, 2026

Have your say on the future of Greater Cambridge

We're encouraging communities to have their say on the next stage of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which shows where new homes, workplaces and community facilities could be built over the next 20 years.

On 1 December we will launch a consultation on the next stage of the draft Plan. It will run until 30 January 2026.

It will be the first joint Plan for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire and has been prepared by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service which we share with Cambridge City Council. It is a Government requirement that we have this new Plan.

The Plan follows significant work by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning on our area's well known infrastructure constraints. It also builds upon consultation feedback from 2021 and updated assessments of jobs and housing needs - with confirmation of the need for around 50,000 new homes between 2024 and 2045. This is to meet the forecast increase in jobs.

Some 37,000 of these homes are already provided for through planning permissions and sites identified in the existing local plans from 2018. The latest changes to the draft Plan also take account of the Government's recent decision not to fund the relocation of Cambridge Waste Water treatment works.

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is a vital local employer and an internationally important healthcare and research location.

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan sets out policies that cover South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge until 2045.

Effectively managed growth

Locations for many of these developments were already identified in previous draft versions of the Plan - such as at Cambridge Airport and at Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Further development is proposed at Cambourne, which is set to become one of the best-connected places in the region through the A428 upgrade by National Highways, the Greater Cambridge Partnership's proposed public transport bus corridor, and East West Rail's project for a new railway station.

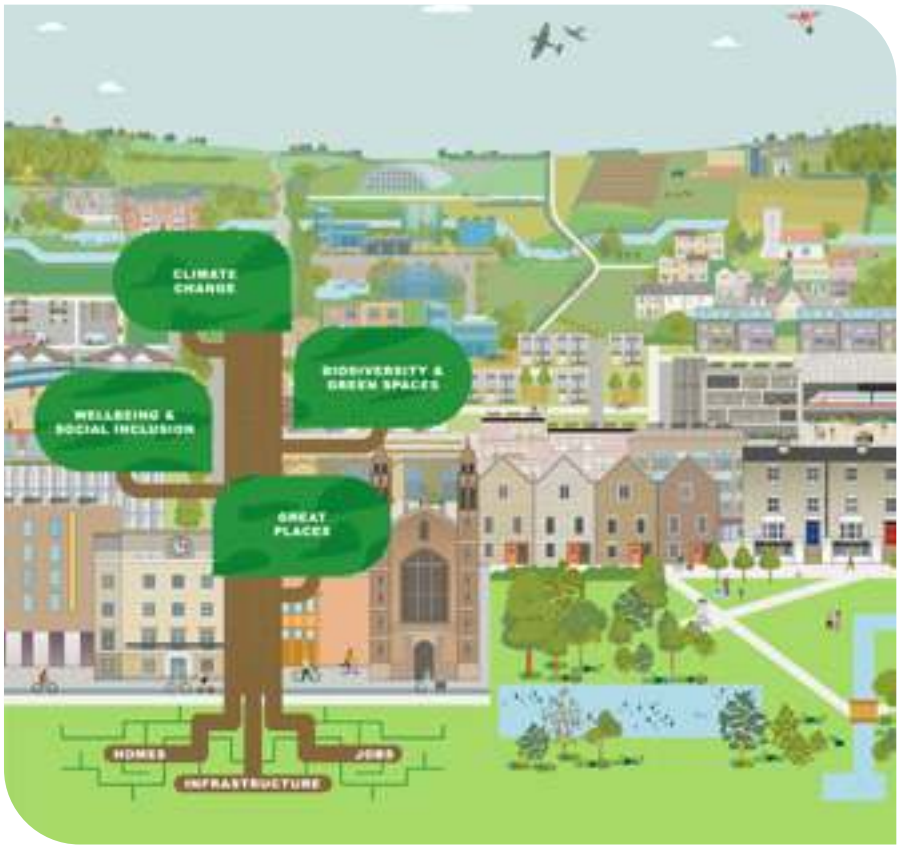
A new community of 6,000 homes is also proposed on land next to the A11 and A1307 near Great Abington, to deliver new homes near to the existing science campuses and connected to planned public transport improvements.

The draft Plan reflects the Government's continued enthusiasm for growth across the area by enabling sites like the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Babraham Research Campus to grow further. In addition, to reflect evidence of a growing need for logistics and new industrial spaces, it identifies two new sites near the A14 - including the expansion of existing lorry parking at Cambridge Services.

There are still challenges before the Plan could be put into practice though. This includes ongoing work by the Government and water industry to find solutions to water supply and treatment issues currently impacting developments across Greater Cambridge. Despite this, progressing the Plan to establish a clear overall strategy for future development as required by Government is important if we are to manage further growth effectively.

From 1 December, you'll be able to comment on the draft Plan and share your views online and at in-person events across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge.

Visit www.greatercambridgeplanning.org to have your say.



The Greater Cambridge Local Plan contains several key themes.

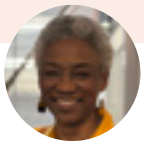
Waterbeach is home to one of the district's exciting new towns.

Your voice matters

When finalised - the Local Plan will influence planning decisions for years to come. It's designed to provide homes for our children, support our economy, protect the area's unique character, and ensure future growth is matched with the right infrastructure – with a focus on making walking, cycling and public transport the first choice.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, Cllr Dr. Tumi Hawkins, said:

> **"This is another key milestone on our path towards the new homes we need – along with protecting our local habitats and landscapes. We must plan responsibly to ensure new homes and jobs don't come at the expense of our environment, and this consultation is a further opportunity for you to help us strike the right balance."**



The draft Plan builds on years of public engagement and thousands of comments already received through previous consultations; the First Conversation in 2020 and First Proposals in 2021.

Get involved

From 1 December, you'll be able to comment on the draft Plan and share your views online and at in-person events across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge.

The consultation will run until 30 January 2026, and feedback will help shape the final version of the Plan, which will be consulted on for a final time in summer 2026 before it is submitted to Government to be examined. Visit www.greatercambridgeplanning.org to have your say.

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MEMBERS GO FREE

Young designers leave their mark in Sawston

We've held a special launch event to celebrate the unveiling of two impressive benches designed by local schoolchildren in Sawston.

The benches, now proudly standing in the playground of Icknield Primary School on Lynton Way, are the result of a collaboration between pupils, our planners, and developers.

Back in October 2022, our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Youth Engagement Service ran workshops with 32 year six students. The sessions explored proposals by developers, Abstract, to build new research and development facilities at Dales Manor Business Park in Sawston. Pupils aged 10 and 11 were invited to take part in the planning and decision-making process. They gained hands-on experience in placemaking and planning, while learning about the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environment. As part of the workshop, the pupils were tasked with drawing designs for street furniture which could sit outside the new research facilities. They also received guidance on careers in urban design, landscape architecture, town planning, and local government.

Three years later, the two children whose designs were selected for the wooden benches returned to Icknield Primary School with their families to see their creative ideas brought to life. Head teacher Diane Mitchell, teachers, our Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, Cllr Dr. Tumi Hawkins, officers from our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service, architects and developers all attended the launch.

Replica benches have also been installed at the entrance of the newly completed research and development centre in Sawston. Located in a publicly accessible area, the benches mark the completion of a high-spec, environmentally conscious life sciences building that will bring new jobs to the village.

To mark the occasion, young designers were presented with framed copies of their drawings and commemorative mugs.

Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins said:

> **"It's inspiring to see how these young people have contributed to shaping their local environment. This project shows the power of engaging children in planning and design - it's not just educational, it's transformational. Their creativity and vision will be enjoyed by the community for years to come."**

New online home for planning and waste

You can now take advantage of our new website sections that cover our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and Greater Cambridge Shared Waste services.

The online presence of these two vital services has been redesigned to provide a smoother, more intuitive user experience. Whether you're exploring a planning application in your neighbourhood or checking your next bin collection day, it's now even easier.

The new Greater Cambridge Shared Planning section marks a major step forward in how our local planning services are presented online. Whether you're looking to build, renovate, or simply stay informed, the site has been designed to support you every step of the way.

Key improvements include a streamlined experience that makes it easier to find planning policies, submit applications, and view planning guidance. Our brand-new document library allows you to easily browse and download key documents such as Neighbourhood Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents, and area maps - all in one place.

It also features a new localisation tool that lets you check what's happening in your area. Simply enter your postcode to view nearby planning applications, flood zones, conservation areas, and more.

The site is mobile-friendly and designed with residents and businesses in mind, making it easier than ever to engage with planning in your community.

We have also launched a new and improved Greater Cambridge Shared Waste website section, which brings significant enhancements to help you manage

your household waste. We've laid out the site to help you find what you need faster - whether that's booking a bulky waste collection, or checking what goes in which bin.

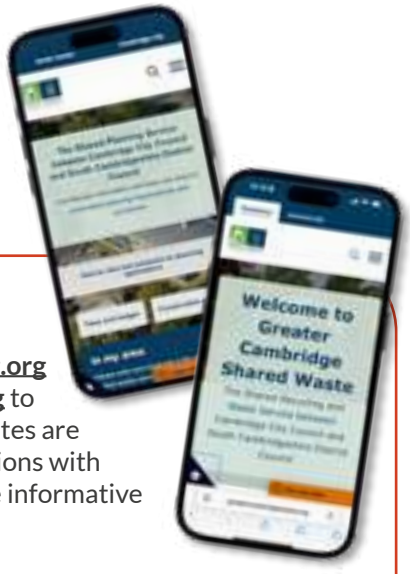
Our new localisation feature allows you to enter your postcode and instantly see your bin collection days and upcoming street cleaning schedules.

Businesses can also use the new Commercial Waste section of the website to manage their waste collections, request new bins, and learn what happens to their waste and recycling once collected.

Both websites have been developed using extensive feedback from local residents, ensuring they meet the needs of the Greater Cambridge community.

Our Deputy Leader, Cllr Brian Milnes, said:

> **"These new websites reflect our commitment to making local services more accessible and responsive. By listening to residents and improving how we deliver planning and waste services online, we're helping communities across Greater Cambridge stay better connected and informed."**



Explore the new sites today

Visit www.greatercambridgeplanning.org and www.greatercambridgewaste.org to see what's new. These improved websites are here to make your day-to-day interactions with local services quicker, easier, and more informative than ever before.

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Constructing a sustainable new neighbourhood in Cambourne

The South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership (SCIP) is a 50:50 joint venture between ourselves and Hill, one of the UK's largest private housebuilders.

SCIP's plan is to deliver a sustainable new neighbourhood for the community on Land North of Lower Cambourne.

The proposals are for 256 much needed new homes, 40% of which will be affordable, alongside new open spaces, children's play areas, cycle and pedestrian routes and a market square.

The maiden scheme for SCIP is being developed across the road from our head office - South Cambridgeshire Hall in Cambourne. Of the 256 homes being built, 102 will be affordable and we will take these on as Council homes. The development is called Cambium Square.

What type of homes are we building?

The 102 affordable homes will be a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership, ranging in size from one bed flats to four bed houses.

A main objective for the whole scheme is to be an enhanced sustainability development through a package of carbon reduction measures such as air source heat pumps, electric vehicle chargers, solar panels, triple glazing and improved insulation.

This will all ultimately lead to lower energy bills for residents.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

What are the timelines for the new homes?

The affordable properties are due to come forwards across four of the development phases with the forecast completion timelines as follows:

Phase 1 – October 2026 through to February 2027

Phase 2 – February 2028

Phase 3 – May 2029

Phase 4 – April 2030

How can I view the new homes and apply?

Our affordable rental new build homes once available can be viewed on the Homelink website.

www.home-link.org.uk

Our shared ownership new build homes are all advertised through estate agents William H Brown as they become available.

www.williamhbrown.co.uk

SCDC@williamhbrown.co.uk

Further information regarding all our current and future new Council home developments can also be found on our website.

www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/new-build-council-homes

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr John Batchelor, said:

> **"Cambium Square will help meet the growing need in the area for affordable housing and promote sustainable living.**
>
> **We're providing affordable yet high-quality and energy-efficient homes for our residents - one of our main priorities. We look forward to seeing the development progress over the next five years."**

Boosting energy efficiency in Council homes

We're ensuring our tenants get the most benefit possible from more than £8.2 million which we received from the Government's Warm Homes: Social Housing fund scheme.

The fund is designed to support energy efficiency upgrades for social housing in England. Its goal is to make social housing more energy efficient, reduce carbon emissions, and help tackle fuel poverty.

On top of this Government funding, we are contributing £10 million - consisting of Council house rents - towards the programme of energy efficiency upgrades for tenants.

Through the programme overall, our Council tenants will feel the benefit of more than 2,300 individual energy efficiency measures, including:

- Cavity wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Air source heat pumps
- Solar panels
- Ventilation improvements
- External wall insulation

The upgrades aim to bring Council homes up to at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C, helping tenants reduce their energy usage and lower their bills by over £200 a year.

We are allocating funding to properties with priority given to those most in need of energy efficiency improvements. Our tenants are being contacted direct if their home is able to benefit – with the aim for us to have as many of our 5,500 properties above the EPC rating of C in the next four years.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr John Batchelor, said:

> **"This is a fantastic example of how we're working to improve the quality of life for our tenants while also tackling the climate emergency.**
>
> **By making our Council homes warmer and more energy efficient, we're reducing energy bills for families and cutting carbon emissions at the same time. I'm proud that South Cambridgeshire is leading the way in delivering real, positive change for our communities."**

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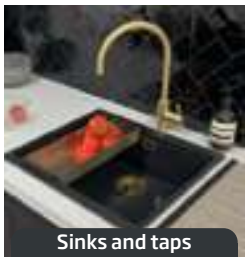
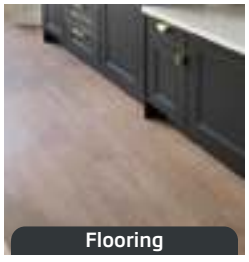
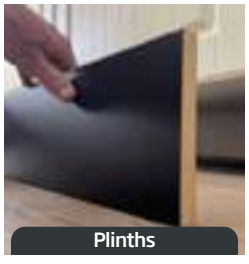
- ✓ Keep your original units
- ✓ No downtime or demolition = less mess & disruption







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Ongoing support for those affected by domestic abuse

We're committed to creating a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected.

Around 3.9 million people in the UK experienced domestic abuse last year, with women disproportionately affected.

Through our links to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and White Ribbon UK, we work to respond effectively to domestic abuse. Our colleagues are trained to support survivors, spot signs of abuse and provide advice.

Our Housing Advice Service can help if you are living with domestic abuse by advising on tenancy matters, including occupation orders and ways to make your own home safer to remain in. We can provide a 'safe space' in our Cambourne office for residents who need to disclose domestic abuse and can accommodate requests for an adviser of a specific gender, particularly if we are made aware of this requirement in advance.

To contact a Housing Adviser, call us on 01954 71300 or email housingadvice@scambs.gov.uk

For out of hours emergency housing support if you are fleeing domestic abuse call us on 01253 501 117. If you are in immediate danger, always ring 999.

Anything you tell our colleagues will be treated with care and handled sensitively.

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WE SPEAK UP

#WeSpeakUp – White Ribbon Day

Building on the strong foundations which earned our DAHA accreditation back in 2022, we also achieved White Ribbon UK accreditation. This supports us to engage men and boys to prevent violence against women and girls. Sexist jokes and 'banter' can contribute towards a culture of abuse against women and girls, and can often legitimise the behaviour of others who may end up committing serious acts of violence.

White Ribbon Day is marked annually on 25 November, and this year's theme - #WeSpeakUp - encouraged men to challenge harmful behaviours – whether that's calling out a sexist joke, stepping in when something's not right, or leading by example.

Everyone can speak up for change. Even the smallest of every day actions help make a difference both in and out of the workplace. Every time we ignore something that doesn't feel right, we miss a chance to set a better example. This November, we've been encouraging conversations between our colleagues, and asked them to consider signing the White Ribbon Promise.

Sign the White Ribbon Promise

Weekly food waste collections coming in 2026

Next year, all households in South Cambridgeshire are going to be getting a new weekly collection for their food waste.

This change comes as part of Government rules requiring all councils to collect food waste separately - helping to boost recycling rates and reduce the amount of food sent to landfill.

Recent analysis of black bin contents revealed that around 35% was food, much of which could have been eaten if it had been used in time. Weekly food waste collections have been shown to increase recycling by making it easier and cleaner.

What to expect

Every household will receive a small kitchen caddy to collect food waste, and a starter roll of liners. If you live in a house, you'll also get a larger outdoor caddy to place at the kerbside each week on the same day as your other bins are emptied. Residents in flats will receive a shared wheelie bin located with their other shared bins.

You'll be able to recycle all types of food waste from vegetable peelings and tea bags to meat, bones and leftovers. The collected waste will be sent to an anaerobic digestion (AD) facility, where it will be used to generate electricity to power UK homes.

The liners provided are plastic, but they are removed during the first stage of the AD process. Once your starter roll runs out, you can use a see-through plastic bag, paper liners, compostable-plastic ones, or none if you prefer.

When will it start?

The service will be rolled out in phases throughout 2026 in January, April, June and September to allow time for us to buy new bin lorries, provide you with caddies and recruit more bin crews.

We'll write to each household six weeks before your start date with full details. This letter will include your first collection date and when to expect your caddy or caddies, liners, and an information leaflet.

For updates and answers to common questions, visit www.greatercambridgewaste.org

Reducing food waste

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Natalie Warren-Green, said:

> **"This isn't just about recycling food waste, it's also a chance to reflect on how much food we throw away. The average UK household throws away the equivalent of 140 meals a year, costing around £470. The energy wasted growing that food produces carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change, adding to the emissions released by food waste in landfill."**

Simple tips to waste less:

- Freeze food (where possible) to extend its life.
- Buy loose produce and only what you need.
- Measure portions before cooking.
- Plan meals and shop with a list.
- Store fruit and veg in the fridge below 5°C.
- Understand food labels - 'Best before' is about quality, 'use by' is about safety.
- Use up leftovers within two days and reheat until piping hot.

Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for more tips!

We're hiring!

We're recruiting operatives for general waste, recycling, and food waste bin rounds. Successful applicants will work across all three services.

If you're reliable, hardworking, and enjoy working outdoors as part of a team, keep an eye on our jobs page for opportunities. www.scambs.gov.uk/jobs

Home and away, recycling each day!

Will you be at home for Christmas, or spending the festive period away? Wherever you are, you can waste less!

Plan your journey

Think about taking packed lunches if you're travelling to be with friends or family. It will save packaging waste compared with buying food at service stations, satisfy fussy eaters and cost you less money too!

Dress smart

Want new outfits for Christmas or New Year without the environmental footprint - or the price tag? Try hiring. Websites like Hirestreet and My Wardrobe HQ make it easy to borrow clothes for up to a month. Then simply pop them back in the post – you don't even have to do the laundry!

Communicate

When it comes to gifts, don't be shy about asking what people would like – and let others know what you'd like too! Apparently, Brits spend £42 million on unwanted gifts each year. If you do receive something you don't want to keep, return it, exchange it, re-gift it or donate it – never bin it!

Embrace vintage

Fall in love with unwrapping your trusty old decorations year after year. Who cares about the latest trends – they won't last. Remember black Christmas trees? But that bauble you got on holiday or that salt dough star your child made in Reception will bring back memories year after year. Add a bit of traditional, compostable holly and voila! Vintage Christmas.

Make friends with your freezer

If you're hosting, why not get ahead with Christmas dinner and prep everything now? Influencers like The Batch Lady and The Full Freezer have had their Christmas lunches in the freezer for weeks already, and this is one trend we are keen on. Getting organised like this means less chance of food being wasted, and more chance of putting your feet up on the big day!

Choose loose

Avoid buying plastic bags of veg in the supermarket and choose loose instead. It's not just the packaging - research shows that if we switched to buying apples, potatoes and bananas loose, 8.2 million shopping baskets worth of food waste could be prevented every year, because we'd only buy what we need.

Recycle right

If you'll be away, check the recycling rules where you're staying, as they might be different from at home. You can always find this information on the local council's website for that area. And if you have guests staying with you then let them know where and what to recycle in your home.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Natalie Warren-Green, said:

> **"These top tips will help you celebrate Christmas more sustainably and encourage you to reduce your waste over the festive period - and beyond!"**

MILLVIEW

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Bin collection calendar

Bins must be put out by 6am on your collection day. Close lids fully. Please report missed collections between 3:30pm on collection day and 3:30pm the next working day.

For advice on how to leave out extra recycling for collection and other policies, or to report a missed bin, visit www.greatercambridgewaste.org

Green bins start their four-weekly cycle from the week beginning 22 December and will return to fortnightly from the week beginning 2 March 2026.

NEVER BIN BATTERIES OR VAPES

They cause fires in our bin lorries, and must be recycled separately.

Vapes can be taken back to vape shops, supermarkets, petrol stations or to the large Household Recycling Centres for recycling.

Small household batteries can be put in a small plastic bag, tied shut and left on the top of your bin on collection day. Larger batteries such as e-bike batteries should be taken to Household Recycling Centres.

GROUP A

TUESDAY

Coton, Great and Little Chishill, Great Shelford, Heydon, Hinxton, Ickleton, Little Shelford, South Trumpington, Stapleford, Whittlesford

WEDNESDAY

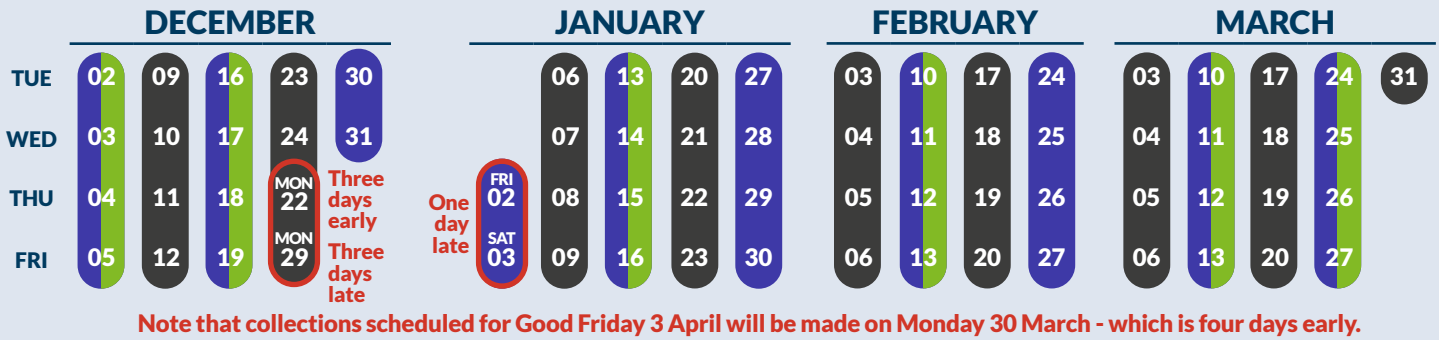
Balsham, Carlton, Fen Ditton, Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Horningsea, Horseheath, Landbeach, Little Wilbraham, Six Mile Bottom, Stow-Cum-Quy, Teversham, Waterbeach, West Wickham, West Wratting, Weston Colville

THURSDAY

Abington Pigotts, Barton, Bassingbourn, Caldecote, Chittering, Comberton, Grantchester, Great Eversden, Guilden Morden, Hardwick, Harlton, Haslingfield, Kingston, Litlington, Little Eversden, Madingley, Milton, Odsey, Orchard Park, Orwell, Shingay-Cum- Wendy, Steeple Morden, Toft, Whaddon, Wimpole

FRIDAY

Boxworth, Childerley, Conington, Croxton, Elsworth, Eltisley, Fen Drayton, Graveley, Knapwell, Longstanton, Northstowe, Papworth Everard, Papworth St. Agnes, Swavesey



Note that collections scheduled for Good Friday 3 April will be made on Monday 30 March - which is four days early.

Blue and green bin | Black bin only | Blue bin only | Change of date

GROUP B

TUESDAY

Barrington, Duxford, Fowlmere, Foxton, Harston, Hauxton, Melbourn, Meldreth, Newton, Shepreth, Thriplow

WEDNESDAY

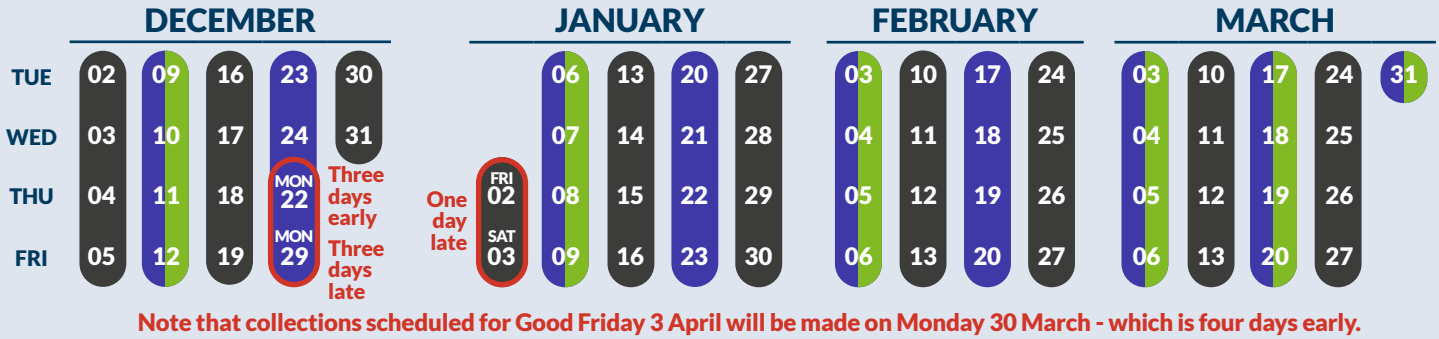
Babraham, Bartlow, Castle Camps, Great Abington, Hildersham, Horseheath (Cardinal's Green), Linton, Little Abington, Pampisford, Sawston, Shudy Camps

THURSDAY

Arrington, Bar Hill, Bourn, Cambourne, Caxton, Croydon, Dry Drayton, Gamlingay, Girton, Hatley, Little Gransden, Lolworth, Longstowe, Tadlow

FRIDAY

Cottenham, Histon, Impington, Oakington & Westwick, Over, Rampton, Willingham



Note that collections scheduled for Good Friday 3 April will be made on Monday 30 March - which is four days early.

What can you **recycle** through your blue bin?

Yes

Remember to rinse food containers

✓Clean ✓Empty ✓Don't bag it

Cardboard

Paper & magazines

Tins, cans & foil

Aerosol cans

Shredded paper *(in envelope or clear sack)*

Glass bottles & jars

Cartons

Plastic pots, tubs, trays & empty bags

Plastic bottles

Christmas wrapping paper *(except foil or plastic)*

Please put used batteries in a clear plastic bag and NOT in your bin.
Place the bag on top of any of your wheelie bins. Batteries must not be put inside the bin. Small portable household batteries can be put in the clear bag - e.g. AA, AAA, 6v, 9v, D, C, button. Do not include mobile phone or laptop batteries. Instead take these to a Household Recycling Centre.

No

- ✗ Black bin bags or rubbish
- ✗ Nappies, tissues, kitchen paper, wipes & sanitary waste
- ✗ Polystyrene
- ✗ Glasses, flat glass or glass dishes
- ✗ Mirrors, Pyrex, plates/ crockery

The following can be recycled elsewhere – check our website.

- ✗ Clothing and textiles
- ✗ Food, liquid or garden waste
- ✗ Wood, plasterboard & DIY waste
- ✗ Furniture or electricals
- ✗ Scrap metal e.g. pans
- ✗ Hard plastics e.g. bucket
- ✗ Crisp packets

What can you **compost** through your green bin?

Yes

Untreated wood and sawdust

Garden waste

Cooked/uncooked food waste (including meat, fish and dairy)

Used paper tissues and kitchen paper

Real Christmas trees (cut up with lid closed)

No

- ✗ Plastic & plastic bags
- ✗ Compostable bags e.g. Biobags
- ✗ Nappies, wipes and sanitary waste
- ✗ Soil or stones
- ✗ Painted or treated wood
- ✗ Cat or dog waste
- ✗ Plant pots and seedling trays
- ✗ Loose ash (wood ash CAN go in the green bin, but only if enclosed in paper bags)

What **rubbish** can go in your black bin?

Yes

Please try to reduce rubbish that cannot be recycled or composted

General rubbish
including nappies, wipes, sanitary waste, polystyrene, broken crockery or glassware (wrapped).

No

- ✗ Rubble/bricks
- ✗ Soil
- ✗ Very heavy items
- ✗ Electrical items or vapes
- ✗ Batteries
- ✗ Loose ash or vacuum dust. Please bag.

Not sure if it can be recycled? Check the 'What goes in which bin?' page on our website, via www.greatercambridgewaste.org for hundreds more items.

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The hidden cost of cosy: Rethinking log burners

There's something undeniably comforting about the crackle of a fire on a cold winter's night.

In the UK, that sentiment has translated into a surge in log burner sales over the past ten years. But beneath the warm glow lies a growing concern - one that's impacting both our health and the environment.

The Government have already put into place the 'Ready to Burn' scheme to help people find the cleanest fuels for burning at home. We support this national guidance and so wanted to remind you about the dangers of burning and how to burn responsibly. Many users remain unaware of the pollutants log burners release, particularly PM2.5, a microscopic particulate matter so small, it enters the bloodstream when you breathe it in.

As stated in the Chief Medical Officer's Report 2022, air pollution has been linked with a range of serious conditions: lung cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes, and even cognitive decline leading to dementia. It's not just the person lighting the fire who's at risk - neighbours and passersby are affected too.

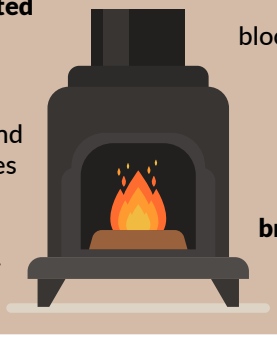
Beyond health, there are also environmental impacts associated with burning wood. When wood is burned, the carbon dioxide that was stored in the trees is released in just a few minutes. It can take years, decades or even a century for a new tree to absorb the same amount of carbon as is released, and in the meantime the atmospheric carbon released contributes to climate change.

Burning solid fuel releases fine particulate matter (PM2.5) into your home and local environment.

Even homes with the new "eco-design" stoves are three times more polluted than houses without.

PM2.5 is the most worrying form of air pollution for our health as it enters the bloodstream when inhaled.

Burning wood releases stored carbon dioxide and it can take years, decades or even a century for a new tree to absorb the same amount of carbon.



PM2.5 is particularly dangerous to children and the elderly, and if an expectant mother breathes it in, it can pass onto the unborn child.

If you don't rely on your log burner or open fire as a primary heat source, consider skipping it this winter. There are safer, more sustainable ways to stay warm:

- **Layer up:** Thermal clothing and blankets can go a long way.
- **Targeted heating:** Warm only the rooms you're using.
- **Hot water bottles:** A classic comfort with zero emissions.

However, we know this is not a choice for everyone. If you do need to use your log burner to keep warm this winter, then please consider these tips:

- **Maintain your burner and chimney:** Regular cleaning improves efficiency and reduces harmful emissions.
- **Use dry wood:** Look for the Ready to Burn logo to ensure moisture content is low.
- **Don't over stock the fire:** People often add more wood, even though the heat lasts for hours after the flames fade.
- **Install a stove pipe thermometer:** To monitor optimal burning.
- **Install a heat powered stove fan:** To circulate the warm air into the room.
- **Burn clean:** Never throw rubbish or non-wood materials into the fire.

These small changes can make a big difference in reducing harm while keeping your home warm.

For more information, visit www.scambs.gov.uk/air-quality-monitoring

Turning sunlight into savings in South Cambridgeshire

In the UK, renewable energy accounts for around 40% of energy produced, with wind energy making up more than half of all renewable sources, according to latest figures.

Surprisingly, solar accounts for only 4.7%, a supply which fluctuates depending on the amount of sunlight throughout the seasons.

In South Cambridgeshire, we receive an impressive 1,500 hours of sunlight throughout the year which can be converted into electricity - even on a small scale.

We have been supporting communities to switch to renewable energy through our Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grant scheme, which has helped village halls and community spaces install solar panels to generate their own renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions, and significantly cut their energy bills.

- Cottenham Village Hall installed a 30 panel 13.05kWp solar system with a 10kWh storage battery, which generates about 47% of energy needed and saved £1,200 in the initial three months after installation.
- Wysing Arts Centre installed 32 solar panels and a battery, generating 1,360 kWh, in the first three weeks. That's enough to power around 136 homes for a day - and saving 0.65 tonnes of carbon.

- Balsham Village Hall installed 12 solar panels and a 10kWh storage battery, which reduced their electricity bill by 40% during the winter months after installation.
- Caxton Parish Council installed 32 solar panels in an 8kWp system with a 13kWh battery, and generated 300kWh of electricity in the month of February, about 40% of total electricity consumed.
- Kingston Village Hall installed 16 solar panels and 5.8kWh batteries and have reduced their electricity bill to nearly zero since installation.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Natalie Warren-Green, said:

> **"We're proud to support local action that brings lasting environmental and financial benefits. It's inspiring to see village halls and community spaces engaged in the solar revolution. As well as helping to generate more renewable energy, we have also supported projects that help cut down energy consumption in other ways, for example, by switching to LED lighting, or insulating walls, doors and windows to keep heat in."**

Interested in helping your community cut carbon and cut costs? Here's what you'll need to provide for a ZCC grant application:

- Expert advice on what measures to install – like an energy survey.
- Three quotes. This is key for making sure you are getting best value for money.
- Calculation of the expected carbon savings from your project. This is often provided as part of quotes.
- An idea of how you will communicate the wider benefits to the community.

The next round of applications for our ZCC grants will open in spring 2026.
Visit www.scambs.gov.uk/zero-carbon-communities-grant for updates.

Creating healthier and safer journeys

As we approach the end of 2025, we're taking stock of the progress made in delivering the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) network of 12 walking, cycling, and wheeling routes - which are designed to provide safer and more accessible routes for everyone.

So far, communities along the Melbourn, Horningsea, Comberton, Linton, Sawston, and Waterbeach Greenways have seen improvements to everyday journeys through better lighting, wider paths, traffic calming measures, safer crossings, new surfaces, and upgraded traffic signals.

Let's start with the Barton Greenway, which will connect Barton village to Cambridge. Journeys to places like Barton Primary School and Burwash Manor are set to become safer and more reliable.

In Barton, the team is completing new crossings, widening paths, and improving lighting - enhancing travel within the village and its connections to the surrounding area.

Work on Barton Road includes widening the walking and cycling path, improving drainage, and creating clearer separation between the path and the road. These upgrades will make the route safer and more usable throughout the year.

Next on the list is the Comberton Greenway, which will connect Comberton, Hardwick, Coton, and Cambridge. Places like Cambridge West, the Sidgwick Site, Newnham, Comberton Village College, and Long Road Sixth Form College will become easier to access by walking and cycling.

As part of the Comberton Greenway, improvements in Coton village include upgraded footpaths and junctions, enhanced lighting, resurfaced roads and paths, and measures to reduce vehicle speeds.

Meanwhile, Adams Road in Cambridge is becoming England's first 'Cycle Street'. A Cycle Street is designed to give priority to cyclists while continuing to share the space with other road users.

Looking ahead to 2026, further improvements are planned to create wider paths and reduce vehicle speeds in the villages of Shepreth, Stapleford, and Great Shelford - making journeys safer for people walking, cycling, and wheeling.

For more information and updates, visit: www.greatercambridge.org.uk/greenways

The newly surfaced walking and cycling path in Barton village.

The GCP is creating England's first 'Cycle Street'.

GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

The GCP - of which we are a member - is the delivery body for a £500 million Government investment in transport, housing, and skills across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge. This includes a network of 12 walking, cycling, and wheeling routes across Greater Cambridge - known as the Greenways. Ourselves, along with the city and county councils, forms the basis of this partnership.

The BUS Scheme can provide £7500 towards the cost of a Heat Pump in your Home, making the transition to Heat Pumps more Affordable.

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Cost of living support: Get help this winter

There's a wide range of local support available to help with the cost of living during the colder months.

Money

Many people miss out on benefits they are entitled to. To find out what you may be eligible for, visit **www.entitledto.co.uk**

Our website also provides advice on Council Tax reductions and housing benefits.

We also offer support through an Income Maximisation appointment. You can access this by emailing **incomemaximisation@scambs.gov.uk** for personalised benefits checks, budgeting advice, and money-saving tips.

The Household Support Fund is a one-off payment of £110, available to any household earning below a certain amount and that hasn't claimed a payment since 1 April 2025. For more information, visit **www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk** and search for 'Household Support Fund' or contact **duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk** for help applying.

Debt

If you're struggling with debt, it's important to seek help sooner rather than later. Citizens Advice, Turn2us, and National Debtline offer free and confidential support. You can also apply for Discretionary Housing Payments if you need additional help with housing costs.

Eating

There are lots of food hubs in South Cambridgeshire. To find your nearest one, visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/food-hubs**

Some require a referral, which can be obtained by emailing **duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk** If your local food hub is closed and you are in urgent need of food, an emergency food parcel can be requested via the same email.

For further information about help with food costs - including free school meals and tips on reducing food waste, visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living**

Community Hubs

We continue to support Community Hubs, which act as local centres connecting residents to advice on health, debt, housing benefits, and food support. They also offer a warm space, a hot drink, and friendly conversation. A full list of Community Hubs is available at **www.scambs.gov.uk/community-hubs**

Energy support

Cold Weather Payments are available to those on means-tested benefits, while the Winter Fuel Payment is available to pension-age residents receiving a means-tested benefit. Additionally, eligible residents can receive up to six pre-payment meter fuel vouchers - each worth £49. Visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living** to learn more about these schemes.

Access to white goods

For families experiencing financial hardship, the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme and the Local Energy Advice Partnership can provide essential white goods such as fridges, washing machines, and cookers.

For more information on the support outlined on this page, visit **www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living**, call 01954 713000, or email **duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk**

The right support can make all the difference this winter.

Building safer communities through partnership

The South Cambs Community Safety Partnership - which we are a part of - works on the principle that no single agency can address all causes of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that effective partnership working is vital.

We work with Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Integrated Care System, the Probation Service, and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

You can report antisocial behaviour, drug concerns, and other incidents by scanning this QR code:

Always phone 999 if a crime is in progress or anyone is in danger.

The Police and the Community Safety Partnership hold quarterly online engagement meetings where you can ask questions. The next is on Wednesday 10 December from 7pm to 8pm. To attend, just email "SOUTH CAMBS" to communitymeeting@cambs.police.uk

The focus areas for the South Cambs Community Safety Partnership are shaped by data and community feedback. The partnership uses the Police's Community Policing survey to understand residents' concerns. This year the Neighbourhood Policing Team's priorities have included:

Antisocial behaviour and antisocial driving

Antisocial behaviour affects how safe and comfortable we feel in our own homes and communities.

Antisocial behaviour can refer to lots of things. It could be groups of people making a lot of noise, trying to intimidate others or damaging equipment. It may be loud or reckless driving - especially at night. It could also neighbour disputes, fly-tipping, uncontrolled animals and more.

Reports about days and times of repeated antisocial behaviour can help Police to plan patrols. As a partnership, we can use a wider selection of response and prevention options, including how we can work with communities to build resilience and spread awareness.

Drugs

Drug use and dealing can overlap with antisocial behaviour. Residents may notice signs such as frequent visits to certain locations or indicators of cannabis farms.

These reports can support police and also trigger safeguarding responses from other agencies.

Substance misuse harms individuals. Visit www.talktofrank.com for information or see www.cpft.nhs.uk/casus for support for under 18s.

Knife carrying

Knife carrying worries residents, though South Cambridgeshire has low levels of knife crime.

The Community Safety Partnership delivers education sessions with the police in schools and youth groups, helping young people understand the consequences of breaking the law – on themselves, victims, on families and friends, and on their future prospects.

Families are a vital partner in helping young people interpret media and peer influences.

For guidance, scan this QR code to be taken to the Ben Kinsella Trust:

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Celebrating a special place for older people in South Cambridgeshire

Over Day Centre is a friendly and caring place where older people from 17 villages across South Cambridgeshire come to spend time, have fun, and get support.

Every week, 48 clients visit the Centre on one or more days. They can be picked up and dropped off by a free minibus service, making it easy for them to join in.

The Centre helps people stay active, independent, and connected to their communities. It also gives families a break from looking after loved ones every day, which can be tiring.

The story of Over Day Centre began in September 1989. Back then, it was just a small meeting place in a temporary portable building. Now, nearly 36 years later, it has grown into a modern care centre with lots of space and activities.

Each day, trained carers run fun and interesting events like games, music, dancing, gardening, poetry, and even visits from animals! There are also trips to farms, museums, and tea rooms. A tasty two-course lunch is cooked fresh every day, and there's always tea and coffee too.

The Centre has a salon, a podiatrist who looks after feet and an assisted bathing facility to allow clients to enjoy a warm soak. The garden has been designed with accessibility in mind, with raised beds and seating so everyone can enjoy the outdoors.

In addition, Over Day Centre is raising money for big improvements. They want to buy a new minibus, decorate the building, add a fresh air ventilation system, and furnish a new day room. These changes will help make the Centre even more welcoming.

We have helped too. In 2024, the Centre received £10,000 through one of our Zero Carbon Communities grants to install solar panels and batteries, helping the environment and reducing energy bills. In September 2025, they were awarded more than £1,700 from our Community Chest grant fund to buy electric awnings. These give shade and shelter so people can enjoy the garden in all kinds of weather.

Over Day Centre is a very special place. It helps older people live happy, active lives and gives families peace of mind. If you want to learn more or book a visit, call 01954 231 807 or go to **www.overdaycentre.co.uk**

Over £2.4 million in local grants support communities

Through our various grant schemes and working with partners, we awarded almost 160 grants to local groups, businesses and projects during the last year.

These included:

- Service Support Grants (£181,650) to help people stay healthy and safe.
- Mobile Warden Scheme Grants (£105,908) to support older and vulnerable residents.
- Zero Carbon Communities Grants (£122,500) to help protect the environment.
- Community Chest Grants (£64,178) for small but important community projects.
- Other smaller grants like Tenant Community Grants, Long-Term Health Conditions Grants, and the Six Free Trees scheme, which gave away trees to 47 parish and town councils.

We also worked with our partners to give out 82 more grants, using extra funding from the Government and other organisations such as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. These grants helped improve high streets, support small businesses, and make communities stronger.

Some of the biggest partner-funded grants included:

- £876,101 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund to support rural areas.
- £230,000 to improve high streets.
- £115,000 for green business projects.
- £377,043 for Net Zero Villages, helping communities become more eco-friendly.

We also helped fund services like Community Hubs, falls prevention, and employment support, using money from health and care partners including the Integrated Care System and Cambridgeshire County Council. These services help people stay healthy and connected.

In addition, we helped bring in more than £36,000 from Sport England to improve energy use at Melbourn Swimming Pool. This included new steps, a pool cover, and a heat exchange unit.

We helped fund community safety projects with nearly £20,000 in grants. This included £16,500 to support young people and over £2,000 for CCTV cameras to help keep public spaces safe, including Milton Country Park. The funding came from the Police and Crime Commissioner and helps make our communities safer for everyone.

All these grants and services align with our Corporate Plan priorities, which form the sections of your magazine and are:

- Healthy and supported communities
- Sustainable homes and vibrant places
- Being green to our core
- Helping businesses to thrive in South Cambridgeshire
- Financially secure and fit for the future

These grants helped improve high streets, support small businesses, and make communities stronger.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Henry Batchelor, said:

> **"Last year we helped support so many fantastic projects, and we want all these funding opportunities put to good use again this year. If your group or organisation wants to apply for funding, visit our grants website page at www.scambs.gov.uk/grants-and-funding"**

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Shaping future careers

This summer, we were proud to welcome several Year 10 and Year 12 students for work experience placements - and lots of fantastic interns.

We offered them a valuable opportunity to explore careers within local government. Students were placed across a range of our teams, including Democratic Services, Economic Development, Finance, Planning, Revenues and Benefits and Transformation.

Each placement was designed to be hands-on and engaging, giving students a real sense of the work we do and the impact it has on our communities.

One parent of a work experience student shared their appreciation, saying:

> "I just wanted to reach out and say a big thank you - every officer she met was so kind and made time for her. In just a week spent at the office, her confidence has grown so much, having spoken to so many different people - and it has really sold to her all the great work undertaken in local government."

Alongside our work experience placements, we also ran a 12-week summer internship programme, welcoming university students and recent graduates to work on meaningful projects across several departments. Interns were given the chance to contribute to real initiatives, develop professional skills, and gain insight into the workings of local government.

Eleanor Low who took part in the internship said:

> "The major thing I've got out of this internship is growing my confidence. I've learned how to use different tools such as Excel and other data processing software alongside learning how to effectively liaise with other staff to develop my projects."

Fellow intern Dylan Morris commented:

> "I feel that I have got a lot out of the internship, being able to develop skills, meet and work with new people, creating a project which will help the Council make decisions and benefit the customers of South Cambridgeshire."

Intern Freya Arnott added:

> "Exploring Council procedures was not only a close insight into local government decision-making, which is highly relevant to my career aspirations, but was an opportunity to understand South Cambridgeshire district, which as a resident, has been a valuable experience."

These programmes go beyond short-term experiences - they're key to our commitment to community and talent development. By welcoming young people, we're inspiring future public sector professionals and strengthening the talent pipeline.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr John Williams, said:

> "Supporting young people to explore careers in local government is one of the most rewarding investments we can make. These placements not only build skills - they build confidence, ambition, and a stronger future for our communities."

Interested in joining us next year? Applications for our 2026 work experience and internship programmes will open soon. For more information ahead of that time, email scdcrecruitment@scambs.gov.uk

Local government reorganisation update

A recent survey that we conducted jointly with Cambridge City Council revealed strong public support for the creation of a new unitary Council for the Greater Cambridge area.

Of the 889 residents who responded to the questionnaire, 69% said they "support" or "strongly support" the idea of a single Council covering Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

The survey, which ran in September and October, was launched in response to the Government's plans to reorganise local government structures across England. These plans will replace the current two-tier system - where services are split between district/city and county councils - with fewer, more streamlined unitary authorities by April 2028.

Under the changes, all local services such as bins, education, planning, roads maintenance and social care will be delivered by one Council, rather than being divided between different tiers.

A proposed Greater Cambridge unitary council – which is one of several options being developed by local councils - would cover the existing boundaries of South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils.

The other options being considered include one that would see South Cambridgeshire join with Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire, and another that would see our district join with Cambridge and Huntingdonshire.

The proposal for a unitary Council for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge is seen as beneficial for South Cambridgeshire because it would:

- Improve services by building on existing joint working arrangements.
- Align closely with the area's economic geography, particularly its role as a leading science and technology hub.
- Provide better value for money and reduce duplication.
- Respect historic identities.

Council Leader, Cllr Bridget Smith, said:

> **"There are many compelling arguments for this footprint, and we're grateful to everyone who took the time to share their views. Ultimately, the Government will decide which local government structures to put in place – but it is clear there is significant local support for a new unitary council for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge."**

Our District Councillors were meeting on 24 November – which was after your South Cambs Magazine went to print - to agree which preferred option we will submit to the Government.

There will be consultation by Government in 2026, before they ultimately make a final decision. New unitary councils are then due to begin operating in a shadow capacity from May 2027, with full implementation expected in April 2028.

Keep up to date with local government reorganisation in Cambridgeshire at www.scambs.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation

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What's on in South Cambs this winter

December is a busy time, with present buying, visits to friends and family, and food shopping. Let Visit South Cambs, our website dedicated to hospitality, leisure and independent retail businesses, take some of the stress away.

Why not visit our South Cambridgeshire Indoor Christmas Market at Cambourne Village College on Sunday 7 December, which this year is bigger than ever. It's a great place to find unique gifts, handmade cards, delicious treats and festive spirit.

The district also has a wide choice of independent retailers, delis, wine merchants, and farm shops. Look out for late night opening times and support local small businesses.

Christmas lights switch-ons are a lovely way to join in with the local community and enjoy the decorations and warming refreshments like roasted chestnuts and mulled wine.

Be on the lookout for Father Christmas! We've been told he's planning to make a few appearances around the district, including at Wimpole Estate's Christmas trail and various grottos and events.

Raise your voices singing carols at candlelit concerts or shouting at the baddies in panto and for the creative types among us, there are wreath making classes to dress up your door.

Stapleford Granary is running elf workshops to entertain the little ones.

If you're looking for a warm, welcoming spot to meet up with family and friends, either to swap presents or just enjoy a meal together, our eat and drink website pages on Visit South Cambs feature a range of restaurants, pubs and cafés.

Usher in 2026 in style at a glamorous New Year's Eve party! Check if you'll need tickets and book a taxi if you don't have a designated driver.

If you are finding it all too much, take some time out, enjoy a coffee, a relaxation session at Chill At The Yard in Knapwell, or a pampering at Quy Mill Hotel Spa followed by a bite to eat in the two AA Rosette Waterwheel restaurant.

Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, there is plenty of inspiration for things to do on www.visitsouthcambs.co.uk from family friendly activities to restaurants for date night and more, plus more details about the businesses and events mentioned above.

Scan this QR code to add your event listing to www.visitsouthcambs.co.uk

And don't forget that listings are free for local hospitality, leisure and independent retail businesses and event organisers. Just scan the QR code on this page and fill in our simple form.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cllr Peter McDonald, said:

> **"We're proud to support the local businesses, craft makers and venues that make the festive season so special. Whether you're shopping for gifts, enjoying a festive market, or simply meeting friends for a drink, Visit South Cambs is your go-to online guide for celebrating locally and supporting the heart of our district."**

Business spotlight: Bar Hill and Dry Drayton

Sitting side by side, Bar Hill and Dry Drayton share rural Cambridgeshire community spirit and an appreciation for the simple things that make village life special.

Bar Hill has the gentle hum of everyday life at its core, a parade of household name shops and key local amenities.

This is all, however, surrounded by well-loved public spaces, dog walker trails and valued community facilities. Recently refurbished, The Fox pub has quickly become a hub for families and neighbours to catch up over traditional grub, while the Sports and Social Club champions community events and live music, bringing everyone together, overlooking the recreation ground. Along with Cam Spice, the much loved and delicious Indian cuisine takeaway option, these smaller local ventures give a village its warmth and welcome.

Elsewhere, the hotel is now in full swing, and is another great place to enjoy a drink and something to eat. Bar Hill's library and Post Office are being refurbished and will open in the New Year.

Bar Hill is full of community spirit too - with thriving Scout groups, Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, along with local clubs offering walking football, cricket, pickleball, tennis and of course football. Locally, the Parish Council work with the primary school through their Junior Parish Council, ensuring young voices are heard.

Stroll south for a few minutes, alongside wide fields to Dry Drayton, and on to a residential road home to overnight boutique accommodation at Crafts Hill Barn - highly regarded for their three luxury cabins, and the Black Horse pub – which has proudly reopened. Further on, Dry Drayton industrial estate quietly buzzes with independent businesses and tradespeople, including Lord Conrad's Brewery, The Ski Exchange, Emily Tallulah Flowers and The Botanical Nest, Adrenaline Martial Arts and Full Circle Fitness - there is plenty harnessing a community as one.

Our Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cllr Peter McDonald, said: "These two villages reinforce that the strongest communities aren't built on scale or brands, but on people, pride, and places to call home. If you want to see your village under the spotlight, email us at openforbusiness@scambs.gov.uk"

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Established in 2018, Big Deal Comedy is the proud home of Cambridge Comedy, hosting vibrant live comedy nights across the region. Founded and run by siblings Jason Stampe and Leanne Clarke, the company has become a cornerstone of the local entertainment scene, showcasing some of the very best comedic talent from around the world.

We're thrilled to offer one lucky winner six months of unlimited access to all shows at Cambridge's beloved Town & Gown Theatre for two adults!

With over 300 five-star reviews from delighted audience members, Big Deal Comedy has built a reputation for creating unforgettable nights filled with laughter, energy, and community spirit.

With the exciting new show format, this prize is valued at over £1,500, giving you front-row access to a rich mix of performances - from local talent and touring productions to comedy nights, cabaret and more.

In January 2026, Big Deal Comedy will embark on its biggest venture yet - hosting three comedy-based shows every week at the renowned Town & Gown Theatre in Cambridge. This exciting new chapter cements their commitment to bringing high-quality live comedy to even more audiences.

Check out **bigdealcomedy.co.uk** for your next comedy fix.

To enter

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

What type of waste will we collect from households every week starting in 2026?

A) Garden waste

B) Plastic waste

C) Food waste

You can enter the competition online. **www.scambs.gov.uk** Click 'Apply' and then 'Reader's competition'.

Don't have Internet access?
You can enter by post. Send your name, address and telephone number, along with your answer to the question, to:

South Cambs Magazine Competition,
South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, CB23 6EA

Closing date for entries is 5pm on Friday 9 January 2026.

The terms and conditions for our Reader Competition are available at **www.scambs.gov.uk/t-c** or can be requested by calling us.

The winner will be notified in January and announced in the spring 2026 issue of South Cambs Magazine.

Winner's spotlight

The winner of our previous competition was Grace King from Cottenham. Grace won a Capybara experience at Shepreth Wildlife Park and said:

"I'm so pleased to have received this opportunity to spend time with the capybaras at Shepreth Wildlife Park. Now I just need to decide who has the honour of coming with me!"

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